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COMMUNICATIONS

This letter contains at least one important fact showing the development of racial relations in the United States since the establishment of the independence of this country.

February 8, 1916.

MR. C. G. WOODSON,

EDITOR, THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF NEGRO
LIFE AND HISTORY,
2223 12th St., NW.,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Referring to your letter of the 4th instant, in which you express a desire to be furnished with information showing the number of negro soldiers who served in the Revolutionary War, their names, if possible, and some information concerning the regiments in which they served, and in which letter you also make inquiry as to whether such records are accessible to some member of your staff for making the necessary research, I am directed by the Secretary of War to inform you as follows:

A cursory examination of the Revolutionary War records on file in this Department has resulted in the discovery of information here and there concerning the services of colored men in that war, but there is no index indicating where records of such services may be found and in order to ascertain data showing the names, organizations and numbers of such colored men it would be necessary to make an extended search of the entire collection of Revolutionary War records in the custody of this Department. Even after making such an extended search the results would be doubtful because the War Department records afford but little information showing whether Revolutionary War soldiers were white or colored.

No attempt has ever been made by the War Department to compile information regarding the numbers or names of colored men in the Revolutionary War or the designations of the organizations to which they belonged, and owing to the limited clerical force

allowed by law, the Department cannot undertake any compilation, which, as already explained, would in any event necessarily be incomplete and unsatisfactory.

Historical investigators of recognized standing are permitted to have access to the War Department records under certain conditions, but the Revolutionary War records have become so worn and dilapidated by reason of lapse of time and long use thereof that access thereto is permitted only under exceptional circumstances. Inasmuch as those records are very incomplete and afford scarcely any information bearing upon the subject in question it is not seen that any useful purpose can be served by granting permission to search those records for the data desired.

Many of the States that had troops in the Revolutionary War have published rosters of such troops. These rosters can probably be readily consulted in the Congressional Library, and it is believed that they afford the most promising source for obtaining the information sought.

Very respectfully,

H. T. McCaIN,
The Adjutant General

The following sent out some time ago under the frank of Congressman Goldfogle may have some historic value:

When the Jamestown Exposition Bill was under consideration by the Committee on Industrial Arts and Expositions of the House of Representatives, at Washington, Congressman Henry M. Goldfogle, of New York, a member of the committee, took a very keen and lively interest in securing an appropriation of a hundred thousand dollars for a Negro exhibit.

On the day the Committee finally revised the bill and voted on it, Congressman Goldfogle was suffering intensely from carbuncles, and was about to undergo a surgical operation. Despite this, he went to the committee meeting, and there moved the insertion of the provision for the appropriation for a Negro exhibit.

Some members of the committee who were not favorable to the project and others who were quite indifferent to it urged the Congressman to allow the matter to remain in abeyance, saying that it might be taken up at some future time. Judge Goldfogle, however, insisted there was no time like the present and that the colored men and women of the country ought to have an oppor-

tunity to show through means of the proposed exhibit the remarkable progress that they had made since the days when they emerged from slavery. In the course of his remarks to the Committee, he said that he came of a race that had been oppressed and which centuries ago had been in slavery, and that had he lived forty years after the children of Israel had passed out of the house of bondage, he would have been thankful and grateful had anyone given his people an opportunity to show the progress they had made as free men.

Congressman Goldfogle called attention to the testimony that had been given during the hearings before the Committee of the great advancement made by the colored people in every avenue of life from the time of their emancipation, and the credit that was due to many of the men and women of the Negro race who had shown themselves worthy of the freedom that happily this country accorded them.

After quite a spirited debate, in which Judge Goldfogle warmly espoused the cause of the colored man, the Committee, by a majority of one vote, inserted the appropriation provision; and thus, mainly through the efforts of this New York Congressman, who has not a single colored vote in his district, the Negro exhibit was established at the Jamestown Exposition.